



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

IN MEMORIAM—MARY STEVENS BEALL,
1854-1917.

By MISS CORDELIA JACKSON.

(Read before the Society, November 20, 1917.)

“God sent her into the world to open the eyes of those who looked to beautiful thoughts. And this is the beginning and end of literature.”—J. M. Barrie.

It is a difficult matter to analyze the life of one we have known and loved for more than a quarter of a century, especially if that life has been symmetrical and complete. The life of our late secretary in any aspect, religious, social or intellectual, is a lesson and a treasure to her friends, for the wise may be wiser and the good better by considering it. To such a life there is only one solution, the world is better because she lived.

In an old-fashioned house, No. 304 Union Street, Philadelphia, November 1, 1854, the blue eyes of Mary Stevens first saw the light. She was the only daughter of Mr. James Stevens, a prominent merchant of the Quaker City, and Georgianna Gill Haines, his second wife. The importance of the family had been recognized, the founder having played an important part in the formation of the colonies. In Adkyns, “History of Gloucestershire, England,” we read the family is an ancient one, having been in the parish of Easington as early as the twelfth century. In 1591 Thomas Stevens was appointed attorney-general to Princes Henry and Charles. A handsome effigy of a man in a gown, kneeling, has been erected in the parish church. The manor of Sodbury, Chipping, given by William the Conqueror to Odo Earl of Champagne, “his near kinsman who attended him in the invasion of England and for his good services,” was purchased by Thomas Stevens and “continued in the family many centuries.” The coat of arms which, according to Burke, belongs

COL. HIST. SOC , VOL. XXI, PL. XVIII.



MRS. MARY STEVENS BEALL, ABOUT 1895.

to those of the highest rank, bears the motto, "Deus intersit," "all's for ye best."

Of the Stevens family, Elias Jones in his history of Dorchester Co., Md., says: "William Stevens came to Maryland in 1651 with his family, wife Madgalen and sons William and John. He settled in Calvert Co., and then removed to Dorchester Co. He was commissioned Justice of the Peace 1669." Archives of Md., Vols. III and V state "February 9, 1669, the Commission is resumed and he was constituted one of the Gentlemen of the Quorum. He was also appointed Coroner of Somerset County with the Oath."

Charles Rousby writing from London, 14 December, 1681, to the Hon. Col. Stevens "at his home at Pocomoke in Md. thanks him for all his kindnesses, especily for favouring, countenancing and advancing that affaire of His Majestie wherein I am concerned." John Stevens the ancestor of our secretary became a member of the House of Burgesses. Hon. Samuel Stevens, who was governor of Maryland from 1822 to 1829 and who received and entertained the beloved Lafayette, was a member of this distinguished family.

Our beloved secretary of sacred memory, with whom many of the molding incidents of my own life are associated, had two half sisters and a half brother over whom she exercised a gentle and noble influence. Her childhood was passed in the privacy of her home under the constant care of a devoted mother, her father having died suddenly of sunstroke in New Orleans before she reached her eleventh year. Her mother was qualified in every way to train her for a career she was destined to illumine. She followed with interest the varying fortunes of the Civil War. Did she dream that in after years she was to be known and admired by its heroes such as General George C. Thomas, Captain Henry W. Frankland, Joseph W. Kirkley, Capt. John Kingsberry, Col. Nathan Bicksford?

At its close she entered the Misses Bedlock's school that had been endowed by Benjamin Franklin. Her mental training had been so well provided for she was able to take her place at the head of her classes. Her thirst for higher education led her to the State Normal School, where she graduated with

the highest honors. The following year she was enrolled as one of its teachers. When asked to chaperone one of her classes abroad, she promptly replied, "Never will I leave America. It is the flower of civilization." Our country never produced a more zealous patriot than Mary Stevens.

It is interesting to notice that her literary convictions were formed while in school. Belles-lettres and history became her favorite studies. A copy of Shakespeare was usually found under her arm. She had a wide knowledge of the French poets and could read them with ease in the original. Thus she grew to womanhood, enthused by the loftiest aspirations and achievements and surrounded by the best social advantages and influences.

Some of the gayest and most delightful hours of her social life were those which she passed outside of Philadelphia in the long visits she paid during the summer months to relatives on the Eastern shore of Maryland. On the adjoining farm lived Mr. Alexander Evans Beall, reputed to be the handsomest man in Maryland. He was a widower with three children, one of whom, Herbert N. Beall, is a leading druggist of Washington. The scion of a noble house was he, a direct descendant of Ninian Beall of Dumbartonshire, Scotland, who fought against Cromwell, was transported to Maryland and granted 795 acres of land, "Rock of Dumbarton," on which Georgetown was laid out a century later. The name of Beall is closely linked with that of the proudest descent in England and Scotland, and in America it is connected with such well-known families as the Brooke of Maryland and Virginia, Willing and Balch of Philadelphia and many others equally renowned. Mr. Beall, brilliant and fascinating, proved to be a typical Lochinvar and the following winter, February 12, 1871, the wedding took place in the home church of the bride in Philadelphia, Rev. Cheston Smith, her pastor, who was described by a maid in the family as "very lady-like looking," performing the ceremony. It was an alliance of congenial tastes, affection and judgment. A miniature portrait painted at this time and in possession of her family shows one of the brightest and most winsome faces. A wealth of black hair on

the slightly bent head with its large expressive eyes makes a pleasing effect. Time has wrought many changes since then, but the smile still lingers on the portrait, unmindful of vicissitudes and trials.

The happy bride began her new life in a stately mansion rising out of a grove of majestic trees. In every room was an enviable collection of pier-glass, antique mahogany, card tables and candle stands. It was the abode of knowledge, culture and refinement, as well as the hospitality of antebellum days. She became a Doreas in charity, a Deborah in counsel, a Hannah in prayer. As a Phebe she was the helper of many. The seal of happiness was cemented by the birth of a daughter, an only child, who, in later life, became Mrs. Thomas Hughes and with her interesting family resides in Georgetown. A grandson, Stevens Hughes, is serving his country in the U. S. Navy. Another is a trusted employee of the American Security Trust Co.

In the fall of 1881 her health became impaired and the following December the family moved to Georgetown, taking up their residence on the historic part of "Gay" Street, now "N," near the present home of the Secretary of War. Here she steps from the privacy of her home life and becomes the center of a brilliant coterie of literary lights. Among them may be mentioned Dr. Joseph M. Toner, physician, writer and philanthropist, Dr. Samuel C. Busey, whose reminiscences of Washington delight the present-day reader, Charles Francis Adams, the historian, and Mrs. Adams, James Madison Cutts, grandnephew of Dolly Madison, Matthew G. Emery, last mayor of Washington, John Adam Kasson, minister to Austria-Hungary and Germany, and Rev. Dr. Byron Sunderland, the venerable pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. We marvel not that she was the admired of all who flocked to her hospitable home. "It is only in such environment we realize fully the picturesque figure of some of her ancestors serenely silhouetted against a mural background."

As a member of the Short Story Club, the Unity Club and Potomac Club she contributed numerous essays to each one. As the private secretary of Dr. Toner she became a close student of Washingtoniana, devoting a vast amount of time

and labor to the study of the life of Washington. It is said no two individuals were as familiar with the daily life of Washington as Mrs. Beall and Dr. Toner. Together they made a most comprehensive collection of the letters and writings of Washington, a task that had never before been accomplished. In 1892 this immense collection was deposited in the Library of Congress and has proven to be of immense value to the historian.

Early in the winter of 1894 Doctor Toner conceived the idea of forming an historical society, not only for the preservation of data relating to the District but for sympathetic comradeship. A meeting was called in the president's room of Columbian, now the George Washington University, March 9, at 4:20 P.M., "for the purpose of exchanging views as to the best methods of collecting and preserving data, relating to the District." April 12 another meeting was called and the Columbia Historical Society was formed. Among its members were men who had achieved a high reputation—Dr. Cleveland Abbe, Col. John G. Nicolay, secretary to and biographer of the immortal Lincoln, Ainsworth Rand Spofford, Librarian of Congress, Hon. John Kasson, former Minister to Austria-Hungary and Germany, Judge Alexander B. Hagner, Judge Walter S. Cox, Matthew G. Emery, Professor Simon Newcomb, Professor Bernard Taylor Janney, Superintendent of Public Schools in Georgetown, and Hugh T. Taggart, all of graceful memory. Only in the national capital could such a grouping come together. Into its limited membership came Mrs. Beall. Her courtly manners, varied interests and literary fragrance made her a welcome member. January 5, 1895, she gave her first and only communication before the Society, "The Military and Private Secretaries of George Washington." It was read before a membership of forty and discussed by Doctor Gallaudet. Already those qualities essential to leadership had been recognized in her to a notable degree—her power to lay plans and execute them; her large vision; her intuition; her executive ability, her keen and retentive memory, and on October 7, following on the resignation of Doctor Marcus Baker, she was unanimously elected to fill out the unexpired term as Recording Secretary.

The second annual election of officers was held at the residence of Doctor Toner, February 6, 1896. Doctor Toner was elected president, Hon. Mr. Kasson and Mr. Spofford vice-presidents, Doctor James Dudley Morgan treasurer, Mr. James F. Hood, curator, Mr. Michael I. Weller, corresponding secretary. Judge Hagner and Col. Nicolay were chosen as councilors for four years. Wisely and naturally Mrs. Beall was reelected recording secretary.

So familiar are we with her labors in the Society for more than twenty-two years, it would be a work of supererogation to even summarize them. Her plans for its development were sane, rational and original. Her motive was inflexible, the ingathering of new members, not only residential but from different parts of the country. "Her fires of zeal burned with unquenchable flame on the altar of her heart." Her active strength of mind and body was given without stint. The society stands today a living memorial to her, speaking more eloquently than any panegyric of speech.

What were her flights of fancy in her day dreams for the society? The question is answered, a library. Our library had its beginnings like an infant colony on a new continent. At first it grew feebly. Years elapsed before it secured a steady growth. At every step she aided and fostered its growth, breaking down the bars of opposition. In March, 1910, the initial step was taken and a library comprehensive in scope and representative of the best literature was opened to the public. In one section are our publications, indexed and catalogued by her. Nay, the arrangement on the shelves was with her own fingers. In another, the priceless collection of manuscript letters of the families of 1800, brought thither by a permanent seat of government. In another, more than one thousand unbound volumes and pamphlets, together with half a hundred maps. In another the exchange volumes of other societies, together with relics of the Washington families. During her incumbency as librarian she undertook on short notice the indexing of six folio volumes of the Letters and Speeches of Carl Schurz, edited by Doctor Frederick Bancroft, formerly Librarian of the State Department. The work was accomplished in a few months.

At the request of Mr. Robert Brownlow she wrote a "History of the Washington Coach" over which a dispute had arisen as to whether the original coach had been destroyed. She proved conclusively it had been broken up and the original pieces sold as souvenirs.

Her versatility of talent is shown in the following works: "The Merchant of Venice as Shakespeare Saw it Played"; "Talks on Early Art in Greece, Rome and Egypt," together with numerous short stories and magazine articles.

A few weeks before she passed away she was unanimously elected recording secretary of the National Shakespeare Federation.

We pass briefly over the closing scenes. The last day of activity, May 15th, 1917, was spent in Georgetown in company with Mrs. Cazenove Lee, arranging and pasting historical photographs in an album. As usual she was full of cheerfulness with no signs of dissolution which alas! was so near. Precisely at five o'clock her earthly labors ended. Gathering together a few remaining photographs she turned to Mrs. Lee and said, "These are all I will have to paste tomorrow. Good evening, Mrs. Lee," and left the house. These were her last words. In a few moments she was stricken with a fatal illness, apoplexy, and hurried to a nearby hospital. Would we could lift the curtain of the sick room and witness the loving ministrations of her physician, our former president! In three days the gentle spirit yielded itself to its Maker.

Her life went out ere it registered its maturest powers. Her day was brief, but from dawn to dusk it was filled with the summer's radiance. The precious moments were garnered, the golden opportunities were met. Her right to a niche in the Temple of Fame there are none to dispute. Who could so nobly exemplify the motto that was engraven on the colonial shield, "Non sibi sed allis."

"Forget thee! if to dream by night or muse on thee by day,
If all the passions deep and wild a poet's heart can pay,
If prayers in absence breathed for thee to Heaven's protecting power,
If winged thoughts that flit to thee, a thousand in an hour,
If busy fancy blending thee with all our future lot,
If this thou call'st forgetting, thou indeed shalt be forgot."



MRS. MARY STEVENS BEALL, ABOUT 1902.